

LINK

Waseskun Communications Network Launched

As of May 1998, Aboriginal justice workers in Quebec will have access to an electronic network designed to keep them in touch with on-line support, training and education, through an innovative project developed by Waseskun House Healing Centre in Montreal, and supported in part by the AJLN.

The Waseskun Network is a secure interactive domain available through the Internet at <http://www.waseskun.net/>.

The three-year project will bring many Aboriginal communities together within a "sharing

and caring" electronic environment where isolated community workers can discuss issues via electronic "chat rooms" concerning healing, support and information exchange.

Since 1988 Waseskun House has been active in the areas of healing Aboriginal offenders through intensive therapy and successful reintegration of ex-offenders. Its Healing Centre in Montreal works with First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities in Quebec, Ontario, Eastern Canada and the northern United States.

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Ottawa Urban Sentencing Circle

Aboriginal justice made its way into an Ottawa courtroom last October when a 50-year-old offender experienced this city's first sentencing circle, under Judge Maria Linhares de Sousa's direction. Since then, justice and court officials throughout Ottawa have expressed a keen interest to learn more about this process. In order to address this interest, the newly established urban Aboriginal justice committee and the AJLN set up a circle-sentencing training session for about 30 participants involved in the delivery of justice.

Judge Barry Stuart, Harold Gattensby and Mark Wedge, members of a Yukon community justice committee, described to the participants how they run sentencing circles and the success they've had with them in northern communities.

The training was based upon a manual prepared by Judge Stuart with the help of the Yukon justice committee entitled *Building Community Justice Partnerships: Community Peacemaking Circles*. The manual and other material to support the development of urban sentencing circles available through the AJLN. Ottawa's first circle and the subsequent training attracted much attention from the local mainstream media.

Since then, the committee has also participated

"A Matter of Trust" video release

The Aboriginal Justice Learning Network along with Solicitor General Canada has completed and released a video documentary entitled, "A Matter of Trust". Officially launched in May, this 36-minute video portrays the work of the Vancouver Police and Native Liaison Society.

Shot entirely in the downtown eastside area of the Vancouver skid row, "A Matter of Trust" examines the partnership building that was required to create what has become a remarkable and productive relationship between the Vancouver police and the Aboriginal community within one of Canada's toughest neighborhoods.

Liaison Society executive director Freda Ens says response to the video has been overwhelmingly enthusiastic and requests for copies are coming from locations within and outside Canada.

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in RCMP community justice forum training to broaden its awareness of a range of dispute resolution processes.

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The First North American "Conference on Conferencing" August 6-8, 1998, Minneapolis, Minnesota

For the first time, a "Conference on Conferencing" will bring together leading researchers, practitioners, theorists and advocates to share and explore this new response to wrongdoing.

Conferencing in various formats is attracting worldwide attention as a way to involve victims, offenders and communities in restorative justice.

The "Conference on Conferencing" promises to be the most important restorative justice event of the year including presenters from Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Canada, the Navajo Nation, the United Kingdom and the United States. It will also feature a panel on Aboriginal approaches to restorative justice coordinated by the AJLN.

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Diversion Guide Published: RCMP

The RCMP have just put the final touches on a training manual on the Community Justice Forum diversion/conflict resolution process, which will be available to interested communities at no charge.

The guide, based on the Australian model of family group conferencing, explains the process, theory and alternative approaches between the Community Justice Forum and the mainstream justice processes.

Corp. Doug Reti of the Aboriginal Policing Branch says the guide will complement the RCMP's ongoing diversion training program.

The RCMP, in its five-year commitment as part of the Aboriginal Justice Strategy, will continue to promote training and support of this diversion model among its members and within Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

So far, about 2,000 community members, justice workers and police have been trained to deliver the program.

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Conflict Resolution Training Expanding

The Canadian Institute for Conflict Resolution (CICR) at St. Paul University in Ottawa altered its regular program last November when it partnered with the Aboriginal Justice Learning Network to sponsor an Aboriginal-specific training session called "Third-Party Neutrals in the Aboriginal Context".

That was when 18 Aboriginal people from various groups and organizations across Canada and the Northwest Territories spent a week together to learn and practice third-party neutral dispute resolution.

This method of resolving conflict between individuals was new to many of the trainees, and several are now using the process in their home communities.

CICR Executive Director Vern Redekop says enthusiasm from the November session sparked enough interest to offer a second round of training, which took place in Kahnawake, Quebec in March.

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